Under the Blossom.

BY MARGARET HAYCRAFT, AUTHOR OF "LINDENHOLM," "AMARANTH'S GARDEN," ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

A WAKEFUL NIGHT.

"MR. CLIFFORD-LEICESTER asked me to see him to-morrow afternoon," Iris told Mrs. Danyers, in response to that lady's questioning.

"Well, my dear, I hope to congratulate you both very heartily to-morrow," said Mrs. Danyers, with much satisfaction; "on such an event as this I can breathe my blessing indeed. And what news we shall have for the home folks, shall we not? I am particularly glad Mr. Clifford-Leicester did not come forward for one of the Severn girls; I know Mrs. Severn would have liked the match for Eva, and I consider her a most objectionable creature. I shall take care the Severns hear of it soon through the Ramsay-Luptons."

Mrs. Danyers passed the evening in triumphant reverie concerning her success as a *chaperone*, and the brilliant event in society of Mr. Clifford-Leicester's wedding (from her house) with his beautiful choice. Leila likewise heard the news, and had no doubt as to the purport of their friend's visit on the morrow. From her heart she wished the two every blessing that Heaven can bestow — yet, woman-like, she was thankful she would be away all to-morrow, for she had promised to spend the day with the former maid, who was now convalescent, so that the sister who had nursed her might have a day's outing.

"How happy Iris must feel this evening!" she thought, glancing at the fair face bending over the fancy-work.

But Mrs. Danyers, struck by the girl's pallor, sent Iris early to bed, telling her she must lose the headache to which she owned, before "a certain person appears on the scene to-morrow."

Mrs. Danyers was so gratified and complacent that she began to plan once more ambitiously for quiet little Leila, remembering that "one wedding makes many," and, as the bridesmaid of her friend, Leila would be prominent upon the festal occasion in prospect.

When she went upstairs, Leila found an offering upon her dressing-table—a parcel left by a young girl who was one of a helpful association in which Leila took great interest. This girl was at a wholesale perfumer's, and had saved her money to secure for Leila a little keepsake of love. The pretty basket contained four bottles of scent, and Leila selected one of daintily-cut glass and hurried off to Iris, who generally came in for a share of anything bestowed upon her friend.

"Iris dear," she said, knocking at the door, "here is a present for you. I thought Alice

"She pointed to the label, and Leila looked surprised." *p.* 146.

was brushing your hair by this time. Are you all alone?"

Iris had not begun to prepare for repose; she looked wakeful and yet weary, and Leila thought there were tears in the violet eyes, though Iris turned aside as she took the scent.

"*Leila!* what made you give me this?" she exclaimed, with a start. She pointed to the label, "Lime-tree Blossom," and Leila looked surprised.

"I only chose it because it was a pretty bottle. Grace Milton, one of our girls, sent me a basket of scent. I am sure you will like it, Iris. But why are you so nervous, dear? Is anything the matter?"

"Oh, yes, *everything!*" cried Iris. "I am so bewildered to-night, and so miserable, but it is only because I am tired and stupid; I shall be all right in the morning. Don't mind about me, Leila. Oh, I wish—I wish I could be good like you!"

"Good like *me*, dear Iris! don't say that. But won't you try to tell me what troubles you? Tell me in confidence, darling; indeed I will help you if I can," and Leila stroked with a gentle hand the beautiful hair she had so often admired.

How could Iris pour out the story of the broken engagement, the thoughts, the yearnings that filled her heart this evening, and made her conscious that to promise herself to another save John Hyldon would be to act a lie? Yet "Jack" was lost to her! Had she not determined to give him up for the sake of money and position, and were not these now within her reach?

"I must take this rich man I feel I can never, never love," she was thinking; "he will give me all I want, and he will provide for the rest. I have lost Jack, and I dare not say 'No' to Mr. Clifford-Leicester,—Mrs. Danyers would never forgive me; but if I marry him I shall be miserable all my life!"

"Oh, no, Leila, I can't tell you," faltered the poor girl, "and I have only a bad headache, I shall be all right to-morrow. You go to bed, for I know you have plenty to do before you start for Fulham."

"If you cannot tell *me*, Iris," whispered Leila, colouring—for it cost her an effort to speak thus to one who seemed unsympathetic—"*tell Jesus.* Pray about these troubles, dear. You can speak to Him as to no one on earth, for He loves you better than anyone else does, and He can make what seems crooked straight and plain before you."

"Oh, no," said Iris, "I can't pray; my prayers now don't seem real—oh, I seem so far off from God!"

"Why can't you pray, dear Iris?" asked Leila, putting her arms around her.

"Oh, because this trouble isn't the sort Christian people have; I brought all this tangle upon myself through my own selfishness and ambition."

"Why, Iris, that kind of trouble—the difficulty we bring on ourselves—is the worst of all, and it is more than you can bear alone. Do to-night just tell God the whole—all the mistakes and the sins and the worries. If you feel you cannot pray, tell Him that too, Iris, and ask Him to help you. Indeed He will hear you and have pity upon you; He never casts out any who turn to Him, and He will not begin with *you*."

"I wish I knew what to do," said Iris, clinging to Leila, with a look as if frightened of the future.

"Ask *Him* to show you," said Leila, tenderly. Her mother's bell was ringing just then, and as Stevens did not hear, Leila had to respond; but she paused to kiss Iris good-night, and to whisper, "I shall be praying for you, dear, that the Lord will guide you, and strengthen you to do His will, and be your very present Helper, whatever these troubles may be."

"Yes, Leila, *you* pray for me," said Iris; for herself, she felt just then too selfish, too false, too desolate to pray.

The merciful tears came to her relief as the night wore on, and her eyes were held waking—the tears which were outpoured at last as she knelt beside her bed, crying for pardon and for succour in her bewilderment to the Friend no suppliant seeks in vain. Iris passed that night through a time of darkness and heart-searching. She faltered a prayer for help, and she seemed yet more deeply in the slough of despond, for she saw in their true light her neglect of her mother and her home, her selfishness towards care-burdened Nelly, her vanity and ambition in making up her mind to secure the matrimonial prize of her new circle, her unkindness towards the one whom she loved still, and knew she must love all her life, though for money's sake she had put that love aside.

In bitter shame poor Iris pleaded to be delivered from her selfishness, to be strengthened even at this late hour to do what was right. A sense of peace came to her at last, an assurance that the heart which is humble and abased shall not fail of succour and guidance, and she fell asleep towards morning, to dream that she and "Jack" were out in the old-fashioned home-garden, under the lime-tree blossom again.

Somehow, Iris felt stronger and calmer and braver next morning. The one she loved was lost to her, lost by her own vanity and folly, but one thing lay clear and plain before her—she must not act the dishonourable part of taking Mr. Clifford-Leicester for his money, when she had no love to offer him. She must not perpetrate the mockery of a loveless marriage, or wrong this man by pretending she could care for him otherwise than as a friend.

Leila had been obliged to leave early for Fulham, but, on waking, Iris had found beside her pillow a spray of mignonette, from a pet plant of her friend's, and attached thereto were the words: "I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not: I will help thee."

How sorely Iris needed help to-day! How she longed that something would prevent Mr. Clifford-Leicester from calling, or that at the last moment he would change his intention of speaking of that which had become to her such a sorrow and pain!

The text attached to the flowers echoed in her heart like sweet music as she went downstairs, and Mrs. Danyers remarked, "You look much brighter and better, my love, for your night's rest. Ah, it is well to be young and to be able to sink into the arms of Morpheus without a care. My very joy on your behalf, dear one, excited my tiresome nerves, and kept me awake; but never mind, so long as *you* have had your beauty-sleep. Confess, now, did you not dream of your wedding-dress, and of orange-blossoms and those envious Severns?"

But Iris had not courage to tell her hostess that her mind was made up, whatever came of it, to say "No" to the grandeur within her reach.

It was a very busy morning, for Mrs. Danyers was just in the humour to make presents, and, in the height of her complacence, she bestowed upon Iris, during their round of shopping, a handsome sunshade, half-a-dozen pairs of gloves, and a new pair of buckled slippers, expressly to wear at the momentous interview. Iris faintly protested, but Mrs. Danyers would brook no objection; she would

have added an expensive hat, but here Iris was firm, for some sweet birds of heaven had been slaughtered to adorn it, and from a child she had been brought up with aversion to such millinery.

"Now, dear one," said Mrs. Danyers, at lunch, "you must look your best this afternoon. Put on your cream nun's-veiling, and just a few of those rosebuds would be becoming. You look a rosebud yourself! Don't be nervous, dear child; we poor women must bring ourselves to endure such ordeals. Be ready by three, for I fancy he will not be late."

And just about three o'clock, Harris, with much inward interest in the forthcoming proceedings, ushered in Mr. Clifford-Leicester, with moustache arranged with extra care, and specially choice button-hole.

CHAPTER VIII.

BLIGHTED HOPES.

MAX CLIFFORD-LEICESTER had his wits about him as a rule, and was at no loss for self-possession when speaking publicly on behalf of objects that would help and benefit his fellow-men; but to make a proposal of marriage when the lady fair does not meet one half-way, or exhibit aught but an anxious interest in the trees in the grassy enclosure of a garden, is considerably more difficult than to air one's ideas on public spaces, free libraries, and the like. And Max Clifford-Leicester was decidedly nervous on this interesting occasion; he almost wished now he had decided to make his proposal by letter.

"The past weeks have been very happy ones for me," he began, making a brave plunge at last, after certain desultory conversation as to the weather and the Academy—"happy, Miss Elwood, in the enjoyment of your society. May I venture to hope you also——"

"Oh," said Iris, rather abruptly, "I haven't enjoyed myself much of late; I think one gets very tired of entertaining and sight-seeing."

"You have a higher aim in life than mere pleasure-taking," said he, eagerly. "Yes, I felt it was so from the first; you, like Miss Danyers, want to live, not for yourself, but for others."

"I am not like Leila at all," said Iris, hurriedly. "Leila is the sweetest woman I know, next to mother; and I—sometimes I feel I am the most selfish creature in all the world."

"Then be unselfish for once," said her companion, gaining courage as those lovely eyes were lifted to his in championship of Leila, "and say that which will make one of your fellow-creatures the happiest and most thankful——"

"Oh, Mr. Clifford-Leicester, *please* don't!"

There was no mistaking the earnest ring in the girl's pleading voice; Iris was too much distressed to be self-conscious, and a look of pain crossed his face as he asked, "Don't *what*, my dear Miss Elwood?"

"Don't talk like that—don't—don't ask me to——"

"I hope you are not pleading that I should refrain from telling you what is in my heart—what I have come to tell you as simply, as earnestly as I can——"

"Oh, no, don't!" cried Iris, her nervous excitement bringing the tears to her eyes as she spoke. "Mrs. Danyers will ask me if—if you proposed, and I want to tell her you did not—I cannot bear to make her angry—I am frightened of her."

"But she will not be angry, dear," he said gently; "your guardian quite approves of my suit."

"Oh," said Iris, "you do not understand. Mrs. Danyers is not my guardian; my darling mother is alive, and I only wish I had never left her."

"Will you not try to tell me, Iris, of what you are afraid? If you will look upon *me* as your guardian and protector henceforth——"

"Oh, no, no, no!" Iris cried out, wondering if that were the proposal she dreaded to hear. "Mr. Clifford-Leicester, you are good and kind—please don't say any more. I could not say 'yes'; and Mrs. Danyers will be angry—if—if I do not."

"Never mind Mrs. Danyers," said he, looking pale and troubled as the feeling came to him that his hopes, after all, had been without foundation; "I want to know why that 'yes' should not be spoken. It may have been only unintentional kindness, but sometimes I have fancied you liked me just a little, Iris."

"I do like you," she said, "I like you better than anyone—Mrs. Danyers knows."

"But not better than anyone Iris Elwood knows? I am sorry I indulged the foolish fancy; forgive me for having caused you this distress."

"It is all my own fault," said Iris, vehemently. "I am engaged really—at least, I *was*—only he is poor, and I wanted money, and I never told anyone about him here. And I *did* try to make you think I—I——"

"Do not distress yourself, Miss Elwood," he said, with the kindly courtesy that was part of his nature. "I am thankful you have thus frankly spoken before, under any misunderstanding, a union took place which on one side would have been unhappiness, and perhaps a wrong done thoughtlessly on the other. Forgive the suggestion, but since you confided to me that you are afraid of Mrs. Danyers, afraid perhaps also of being persuaded to act against your conscience, would you not be better under the care of your good mother? Is there any urgent reason why you should live away from home?"

"No, only I was tired of working for my living," said the girl, with a flush of shame. "How kind you are! Please forgive me for treating you so. Oh, I do hope you will be very, very happy before long!"

"Thank you," he answered, gently. "May the clouds be lifted for you, Iris; and I trust you and I will always look upon each other as friends. Now forget this afternoon, and get back to your mother as soon as you can; you will lose your country roses if you stay much longer amid your present surroundings."

After the lapse of reasonable time in the opinion of the mistress of the house, Mrs. Danyers and tea made their appearance almost simultaneously. Harris set down the tray, and when she had left the room, Mrs. Danyers, who had made a careful toilet and shone resplendent in a tasteful tea-gown, asked in astonishment, "Where is Mr. Clifford-Leicester, my love? Surely he waited to converse with me on such an important matter?"

"No, he is gone; he is travelling this evening," said Iris, bending over the tea-pot.

"Yes, but not for nearly three hours; he told me yesterday he is to catch the express. It would only have been polite to wait till I came down; but there, there! one must make excuses for lovers, and everyone knows he is shy. Of course, he will write to me to-morrow. You silly, romantic child! you have actually been crying. Why, before I was your age I had received seven proposals; poor Mr. Danyers was the tenth, I remember, and I was quite tired of that kind of thing, so you see I yielded at last! Well, now, I must not be inquisitive as to the conversation, must I? But

was anything said as to the time of the marriage, and do you think the dear good mother would like to be present?"

"Oh, Mrs. Danyers," said Iris, trying to speak carelessly, but feeling very much frightened, "you are mistaken in supposing there will be any marriage. I dare say I shall never marry; and mother always says some of the best and happiest people she knows, and some of the most useful, are single ladies."

"What does all this mean, Iris? I am astonished at Mr. Clifford-Leicester! Do you mean to say this was only an ordinary call, and that, after all his attentions to you and your pleasure in receiving them, he never proposed to you this afternoon?"

"I—I don't know," stammered Iris, wanting to speak the truth, and beginning to tremble beneath the keen glance of those cold black eyes.

"You do not know if he proposed or not? Come, Iris, do not jest or trifle; did Mr. Clifford-Leicester ask you to become his wife?"

"Not exactly," said Iris; then she stood up erect, and with a beating heart she continued, "He said enough to show that he wanted me, but I asked him not to go on. I don't know that I ought to tell you what after all was private; but you have been very kind to me, and mother isn't here, so I will tell you. I asked him to stop, because I knew in my very heart that I could never—never marry him."

"Oh, indeed. May I ask the reason for this decision so late in the day? I suppose Mr. Clifford-Leicester reminded you of the very open encouragement you have given him for some time?"

"He was kindness itself," said Iris, the tears falling again, "and I am not a quarter good enough for him. I *did* try to make up my mind to say 'Yes,' Mrs. Danyers. I know I have disappointed you; but, oh, I am so miserable! I have made such mistakes and been so unkind, and now it is too late."

"I suppose all this means," said Mrs. Danyers, "that some bygone childish fancy is still in your thoughts. Nonsense, Iris, be a woman; remember all your poor mother's struggles. Do not, for a silly schoolgirl memory, throw away such a chance as Max Clifford-Leicester; I will write to him to-night."

"No," said Iris, firmly. "To marry without love to help the others would be to do evil that good may come—I saw that plainly as I lay awake last night. Mr. Clifford-Leicester knows he and I can only be friends; I will act no falsehood towards him. He deserves a wife's whole heart, and I only hope he will be very happy yet."

"Oh, as to that, one of the Severns will soon comfort him, no doubt—a man of his possessions need not go begging for a wife," said Mrs. Danyers; "but I shall not accept this as your final decision, Iris. I must ask you to leave me now, and to see me again on this subject to-morrow morning. If you decide to act sensibly, a letter will soon recall him here. If you persist in flying so obstinately in the face of Providence, I, for one, wash my hands of you, and in that case I shall ask you to pack up and return to Bayston to-morrow. I never keep ungrateful, self-willed people under my roof, if I can help it; so make your choice—you know me, and you know I mean what I say."

"I *have* made my choice!" cried Iris, impetuously, "and I cannot—will not marry just for money. I will not wait till to-morrow—I will go back to Bayston, home to mother, this very night!"

"Just as you choose," said Mrs. Danyers, coldly.

Iris left the room in a heat of indignant excitement, and the thought suddenly flashed upon her that to reach Bayston would cost nearly thirty shillings, and she possessed but two-and-ninepence in all the world!

(*To be continued.*)

"HOME, SWEET HOME."

WITHOUT, the rain is falling fast,
The wind incessant beats,
And seems to fill with wailings loud
The wet, deserted streets.
Within, the ruby curtains drawn,
Shut out the autumn night,
And, glowing on each happy face,
The fire burns clear and bright.

Oh, home, sweet home! the father sits
Amongst his children fair,
And mother smiles beside the fire
In her own rocking-chair.
Lessons are said, and work is done,
And all have earn'd the rest
Which this still hour of evening brings—
The dearest hour and best.

And now the children want the hymn
Which always must be read
Before, with many a laugh and shout,
The gay troop go to bed—
"With smiles of peace and looks of love,
Our dwelling's light to make,"
And every young voice softly ends
The verse—"For Jesu's sake."

Oh, home, sweet home! most truly sweet
When God has there a throne,
And makes its hearth a holy place
Though humble and unknown.
Type of the blissful Home above,
Where His redeem'd shall rest,
Gather'd around the Father's knee,
And folded to His breast!

SHIRLEY WYNNE.

LIKE AND UNLIKE.—"There are three things," said a quaint old philosopher, who had made a study of woman and her ways, "which a woman should be like and at the same time totally unlike. In the first place, she should be like a snail, because the snail is always to be found in his house. And she shouldn't resemble this singular creature, because he puts all that he has in the world upon his back. Again, she should be like an echo, because the echo speaks only when it is spoken to; and unlike it, because the echo is always bound to have the last word. Once more, a woman should be like the town clock, in that she should keep regular hours, and be exact in all things. And, unlike the town clock, she should not let her tongue be heard throughout the town."

"Home, sweet home."

A TALK ABOUT TEMPER.

"TEMPER is everything," says an old motto. In strictness of speech, of course, *temper* is not *everything*. The motto answers to many other modes of expression in which we intend a greater by a less, or a less by a greater: as, "Money is everything," "Love is everything," "Health is everything," "There is nothing like leather," etc. With this explanation I should say that, as regards the moral conduct of people, the peace, goodwill, and good understanding between men and women—temper *is* everything.

Returning home one day, I happened to call at the house of an acquaintance, and found the husband and wife engaged in a trifling dispute. It was the fault of these two to have acquired such a habit of contradicting each other, that they seemed to take a pleasure in it; and the children had acquired so much of the spirit of their parents, that you seldom heard them open their mouths but in an angry tone of voice. On this occasion the wife continued to maintain her ground; and the husband, in a fit of ill-nature, left the room. A few minutes afterwards a boy of about nine years of age quarrelled with his sister, who appeared to be about eleven, and gave her a violent blow. The mother began to bluster, and the boy put on a surly countenance, and assumed such an air of defiance as plainly indicated that he had no apprehension his mother's threats would be carried into execution. After doing what I could to cast oil on the troubled waters, I came away, muttering to myself, "Well, I see that *temper is everything*."

I was lately called in to assist in settling a difference that had taken place between some persons, and which might have been easily managed, had either of the parties been ready to yield a little to the other; but I could not prevail on any one of them to give way in the least, and I left them, more than ever convinced that *temper is everything*.

The value of good temper appears in a strong light in the contrasted examples of two families well known to me.

Robert Jackson was a hard-working labourer: he had saved sufficient to set up house, and soon after marriage he took a small farm. His wife was a strong-built woman, and capable of any exertion, but intolerably idle, negligent, and dirty, with the usual accompaniment of bad temper. When Robert had occasion to go from home, or take a job of work at a distance, she would not take the least care of the land or the cows. He soon lost all he had earned, and returned to a mean cottage and to common day labour. He now began to visit the public-houses; and the next report was that they quarrelled.

One day I was sent for in haste, not knowing for what purpose; and on my arrival I found report true. With as much delicacy as possible, I mildly remonstrated, and desired that each separately would tell me the cause of their unhappiness. The man wept much. The wife said he had been spending his money, and neglecting his family. He answered that he had always done the best he could for his family, and had thrown into his wife's apron several pounds only two nights before—his hard-earned wages during a few weeks from home; and that, as to going to the public-house, he said he was in fact *driven* to it, for she afforded him no comfort in his home; that on his arrival the other night, tired and hungry, he had asked her for something to eat, but she was sullen and would not prepare it.

I then turned to the wife to hear what reply she would make; but though she could talk freely enough when I first entered, she had never a word to say now; indeed, I know well enough that she could not deny the charge; for I had always found her house and herself in a dirty, disordered condition, and the children ragged and sickly through neglect. She would beg clothes for them, but would neither wash nor mend; and she would gossip in other houses, and leave the little ones exposed to fire and water. I have seen her sitting close to the grate when the hearth has been completely strewn with cinders. Can it be any wonder that a man so circumstanced, and with a wife thus wasteful and negligent, dirty and ill-tempered, should have recourse to the public-house? He was, in a sense, as he expressed it, *driven to it;* and I fear thousands more are thus driven. I do not pretend to deny that there were faults on both sides; I speak of facts only as I saw them through a course of years; and they were a sad illustration to prove that "temper is everything."

On the other hand, I know a couple who are as happy as poor people can well be. The man is a collier, and, like other people in his situation, is exposed to great hardships, having to go to work at three or four o'clock in the morning over bleak moors. When I have occasionally gone to his cottage, a little before his return, it has pleased me much to see the table spread with a coarse clean cloth, and victuals in readiness; or a plate with bits of mutton or bacon before the bars, and potatoes on the fire; or the tea-things set and the kettle boiling. The good man coming in tired, wet, and black as coal could make him, and bearing a heavy lump of that article on his back, would meet with a smiling welcome; the wife would run to help him off with his burden, and the children would prattle with delight—"Oh, daddy is come!" He would then have a wash in the basin of water which always stood in readiness, and afterwards sit down to his *baggin*, as it is called, with as good an appetite and as easy a mind as a king might envy.

To a man thus circumstanced, the public-house has no attractions. His comfort is *studied;* his earnings are economised; his wife and children are clean and decently clad; his fireside is comfortable, and he can enjoy it in peace. Having to rise early, they must needs retire early to bed. When I have seen the cottage shut up at nine o'clock, I could not but contrast it with many others, and particularly with the public-houses, in which I have found numbers of colliers and labourers; some, perhaps, through the discomforts of home, and others, no doubt, from their own depraved choice.

These are characters of real and everyday life; and what I wish should be particularly observed, is the striking difference between two families in similar station. The former commenced life with fair prospects as working people, but were soon reduced to wretchedness through idleness and surly tempers; the latter were in the hardest condition, and yet lived most happily, proving that after all "temper is everything."

I believe it is very unusual for married folks to *thank* the clergyman who tied the knot; it is sometimes sung, "The parson is to blame, for he tied the knot." I can,

however, mention one case, and only one from my own experience, in which gratitude was expressed to me for having performed the marriage ceremony. Many years ago a poor man put in the banns, which were objected to; and the circumstance occasioned a few weeks' postponement of the union. About four years afterwards, a man came up to me with an open, smiling countenance. I did not at first recognise him, but he evidently knew me. "Sir," he said, "you remember marrying me, don't you?" Pausing for a moment, I replied, "Oh, yes, it was you that had some trouble over it—I hope you have not repented it?" With emphatic tone and look of real pleasure he answered, "Oh no, sir, I am very happy; and I thought whenever I saw you I would thank you for what you did for me."

There would be no difficulty in giving a character to the good man's wife in this case, and no unpleasant rebuke would have been conveyed if the motto had been placed in the most prominent position in their cottage home—"*Temper is everything.*" A. S. C.

HOW TO MAKE TIME.

BY PHYLLIS BROWNE, AUTHOR OF "MOTHERS AND WIVES," ETC.

THERE are people who, though always seeming busy, get very little done; others get a great deal done, and yet always seem to have the command of leisure. What is the explanation of the difference between the two? How is it that many busy people have time to spare? We believe that the secret of the mystery is—sometimes, not always—that the leisured class of busy people never dawdle; the driven class occasionally indulge in this weakness.

We are told sometimes that it is impossible to pass the lessons of experience on. Notwithstanding this discouragement, let us try whether an experiment made by one mother cannot be adopted by others, and thus leisure for many be obtained.

A very clever American woman, named Mrs. Nitsch, who died not very long ago, was much impressed by noticing that the busiest people have often the most time. Being herself a very busy person, yet scarcely knowing what it was to have half a day's real leisure, she resolved to find out exactly what she did with her time. To this end she arranged to keep an account book, wherein the record was to be, not of pounds shillings and pence, but of hours and minutes. She noted down the exact time at which she began or left off each task; this told the tale, which was that the time between beginning one task and ending another was lost. Sometimes ten minutes only, sometimes half an hour would elapse, and when these odd minutes were added up, it was found that occasionally it happened that the time lost was really longer than the time employed.

After making this discovery Mrs. Nitsch looked back over her days. She then remembered that after she had finished a piece of work she used to allow herself to be attracted, say, by a few words in a newspaper, when she would pick it up and read it standing; or looking out of window, she would watch anything that caught her eye, or go out and tie up a flower, or gather a bouquet. Time thus lost was not always actually wasted, yet it yielded neither pleasure nor rest; there was nothing to show for it, and it certainly added to the "driven" feeling, besides stealing all possibility of leisure. Thenceforth our friend set about her work in a different fashion. She made a practice of going steadily on from one thing to another until the work which had to be done was finished, trying to dove-tail one task in with another. In a very short time she found that no one with the same amount of work to do had so much leisure as she.

Perhaps busy mothers who read this will feel inclined to say, "What a painful life women must lead who cannot stop for a few minutes to read a few lines, or to tie up a flower!" It must be remembered, however, that we are thinking now of those whose lives are full of duty and responsibility, and who feel very much the want of a little leisure.

To such women a regular period of leisure would mean increased health, energy, enjoyment of life, opportunity for culture, and ever so much more also. It is quite sad to think that this valuable leisure may be frittered away without any one knowing how it goes. Snatched minutes of rest do no good at all; they simply make the individual who has snatched them feel guilty, and thus they add to her anxieties. But a substantial piece of rest that is felt to be a reward for "Something accomplished, something done," is a help and blessing. If by arranging her work a little, a mother can secure such leisure, surely she would do well to make it her own.

To keep an account of time is chiefly valuable because it makes those who find the days too short for all that ought to be got into them, and out of them, realise that time spent in dawdling is actually wasted. It is astonishing how frequently without an aid of this sort, that brings the fact home to them, busy people will throw away the time whose flight they constantly deplore.

We all know, for example, the excellent, well-meaning, energetic but fussy person who never begins a task without explaining to every friend with whom she comes in contact how very busy she is, how little time she has to spare, how she cannot do this, that, or the other thing she would like to do, because she has so much devolving upon her. Such an individual wastes the time of others, as well as her own. We know, too, the equally well-meaning and equally energetic person who wastes time because she does not work with her head as well as her fingers. She is in so great a hurry that she does not think before she acts, and so makes two journeys where one might have been sufficient, and never saves her own strength. Then there is the woman who wastes precious time because she has the habit of beginning one task before she has completed another. These workers are always in a muddle. They have not learnt how to make time.

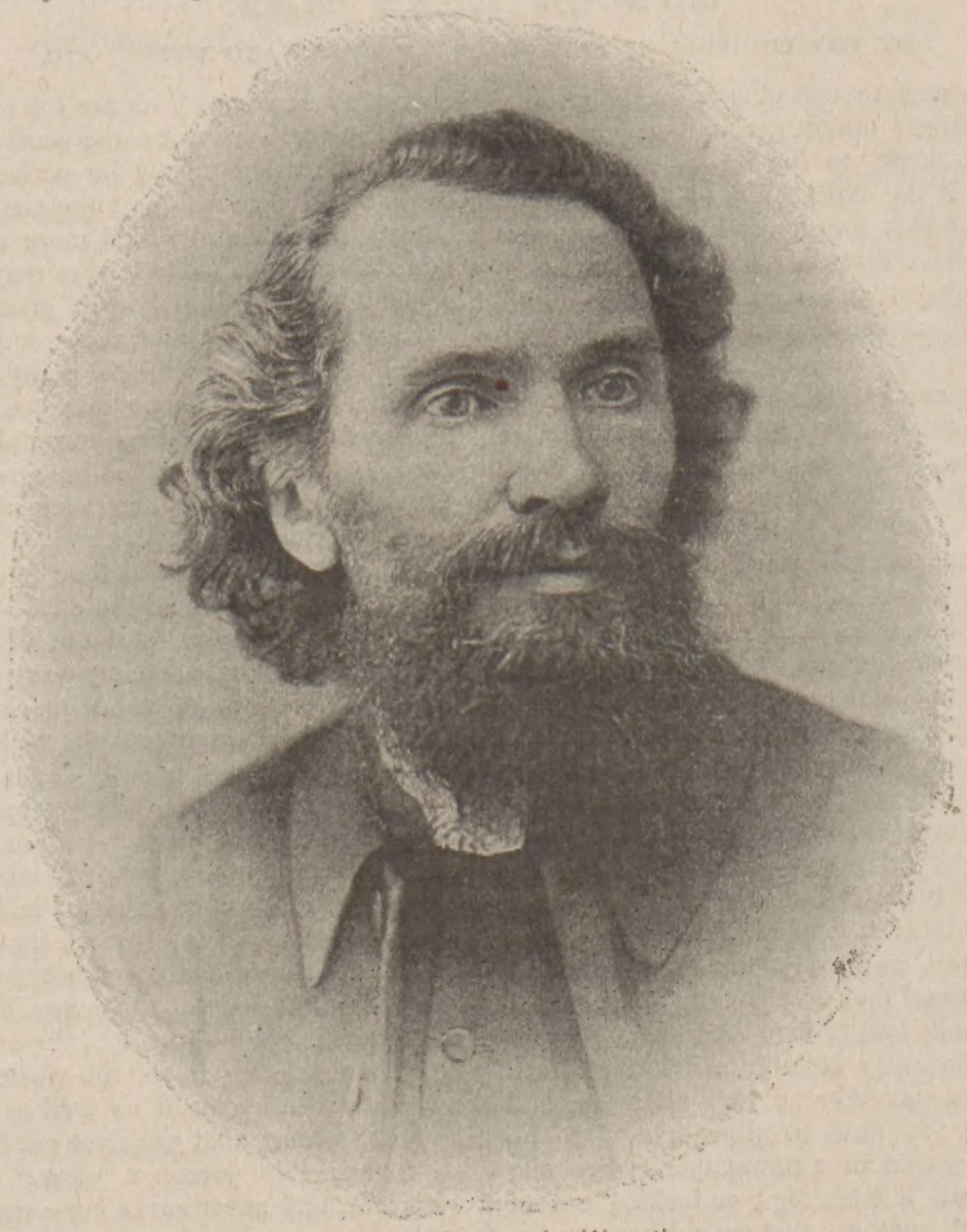
A wise man has told us that "Time is the stuff that life is made of." As thrifty housewives aim at cutting out material for garments to the best advantage, getting a sleeve out of this fragment, and gussets or linings out of that, so thrifty wives should aim at getting as much as they can out of the limited supply of time at their disposal. If they would divide it profitably, they must aim at getting out of it, not only the solid pieces of good housewifery, skilful needlework, and wholesome cookery, but also a little pleasant leisure for their own mental culture and recreation. May we assure them that this addition is most likely to be obtained by those who understand the worth of minutes?

"I'LL TELL THE CHILDREN'S MAN."

BY MAGGIE MACLEOD.

"I'LL tell the children's man," an ill-used child of three was heard not long since to say to her mother, who was threatening her with some new cruelty: "If you *do*, I'll tell the children's man." The "children's man," it appeared, was a kind-hearted official of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

To find out something about the "man" who seemed to have inspired such confidence in the heart of this little girl, I went a few days ago to the Society's head-quarters, where I had a long and interesting chat with the Hon. Director, the Rev. Benjamin Waugh.



The Rev. Benjamin Waugh.

One good talk with this gentleman would scatter the doubts of the most unbelieving as to any necessity for the existence of such an organisation. Sparing, as the Society does, no expense, allowing no surmountable difficulty to stand in the way of the rescue of any child, taking the children from the cruellest torture to place them under kind and loving influences, too much cannot be known of its methods or said in its praise.

Mr. Waugh's account of his work, and his story of the frightful cruelties to which his *protégés* have been subjected, made one's blood curdle; while the "feel" of a spongy swelling, as large as half a big lemon, on the forehead of one little fellow, whom I saw, and the sight of a pair of "black eyes" that extended nearly to his mouth, both as the result of a kick from his father, I shall never forget. It was a relief to hear the little man say quite brightly, "I'm getting better now, sir"; yet one could not help thinking "getting better" would not shut the door upon memory, and that always for him the word "father" would recall associations that ought not to be the possession of any child.

One has shuddered in reading of the propitiatory offerings of children to pagan deities, yet has respected the religious fervour which prompted them; but here, in the very heart of nineteenth century Christianity, there is now brought to light a sacrifice of little ones—to gods more cruel and exacting than any old-time deities: the gods of Self and Fashion—that is so hideous and so utterly revolting as to be almost impossible of belief. And one of the most startling facts in connection with this modern child-sacrifice is, that the guilty parents have not even the excuse of being driven to their cruelties by poverty. Mr. Waugh assured me that a child rarely comes under the notice of the Society whose father is earning less than 27s. a week. Indeed, by far the larger number of delinquents may be classed with those who not only can afford to keep their children, but move in "good" society, and in some cases "adorn" the ranks of the professions.

Here is an instance. A husband, whose social standing is one of unusual responsibility and influence, discovers, by accident, that one of the little ones sitting at his table cannot legitimately call him "father." Being greatly incensed, he refuses to allow the child to remain any longer in his sight, and it has to go somewhere—anywhere; he does not care. The sad secret being out, the mother, too, finds the little one in the way; it is therefore banished to an unused room at the top of the house.

Here it is kept a prisoner; a little food is supplied, but no attention whatever is paid to any sanitary necessity; and, as the child is not allowed to go out for any purpose whatever, its condition and that of the room can readily be conceived. In addition to this, the child at regular intervals is subjected by its mother to most terrible torture. This treatment would, in all probability, have been continued until death came to release the little unfortunate, had not its pitiful screamings roused the indignation of the neighbours, and prompted them to communicate with the Society.

An agent was immediately sent to the place, accompanied by a medical man. These gentlemen, at the risk of any legal proceedings being taken against them, as soon as the door was opened, made their way to the top of the house, where they found the little girl in the condition I have described. For this offence the mother, a lady by birth and education, received six months' hard labour.

Selfishness and Immorality seem to be the two great influences at work against the well-being of the little ones. A man gets a notion of saving, is successful, and it grows into a passion to which everything must bend; or he wants

Getting Better.

to keep dogs or a betting book, see life, and enjoy himself. Little children get in his way, use some of the money he might otherwise employ in personal gratification, so they must be got rid of; and as slow starvation induces a host of diseases, one of which is sure to prove fatal, and the doctor, unsuspicious, will give a certificate on that disease, the man's heartless crime in all likelihood goes undetected.

It is bad enough when cases of this sort are brought home to men, but far worse when we find them connected, even remotely, with women. Let a woman marry with a low ideal, and anticipate a fashionable, gay, "free" life in preference to that of homely motherliness, and she does not hesitate to gain her end at any cost, even though it be at the sacrifice of her woman-nature. Alas, for any "little stranger" that may arrive in that house, there is but sorry welcome! For that little one there are no soft caresses, no tender watchings, no good-night kisses, no tiny folded hands to say "Our Father"; the attic, cold and desolate, is its cradle, with the bare boards for pillow, and the moaning of the wind for lullaby. Tired and utterly lonely, each night it sobs itself into restless sleep, and each day reawakens with but a keener sense of its wretched, desolate condition. With the scantiest and most unsuitable food; with no plaything but a stray sunbeam or a dusty spider's web; no playmates save a few flies, a daddy-longlegs, or a wandering beetle; left to roll itself in filth, what *can* its life be but one protracted wail of pain?

I saw one of these neglected babies, who had been washed three times, on reaching the home, and "then it would not come clean." Its eyes were still sore with the filth that had become *literally embedded* in them; and, as the nurse very truly put it, "Its little skin has not got soft yet." As I looked on this twelve-month old mite in Mr. Waugh's fatherly arms, and watched it cooing with the utmost complacency and satisfaction in the face of its *pro tempore* nurse, I could but be glad that it had found at last such a tender resting-place.

Of course, with all its resources, the Society cannot always succeed in bringing a case home. For instance, some one writes and says: "Every night in a house near us there are dreadful screams and cries as of a child in distress; will you see to it?" An agent is despatched without delay, inquiries are made, and lodgings are even taken in the neighbourhood in order that the case may be watched; but the guilty mother gets "scent," and in the morning both she and the child are missing. If a clue to their whereabouts can by any possibility be obtained, the case is still watched and followed up, at whatever cost.

It may occur to some reader to ask: What becomes of the rescued children? Some of them, I am told, are "adopted" in good homes, some are put into industrial schools, and some are sent abroad. Those who remain in the Shelter until their parents' term of imprisonment expires are then handed back to them; but the precaution is taken of supplying the neighbours with postcards, so that

Rescued.

any repetition of cruelty may at once be reported to the Society.

Of the Shelter itself one can only say that it is well worth a visit. The house staff consists of matron, assistant matron, nurses—who are kind, sensible, motherly women—and servants. There are bright and cheerful day and night nurseries; rooms for girls, with dolls and dolls' houses, and all such juvenile feminine amusements; rooms for boys, with rocking-horse and other and more mannish playthings; baths with water that must seem a veritable sea to those who have seldom, if ever—it is scarcely any exaggeration to say—known what the touch of water is. Said one little fellow, quite seriously, when the process of *actual scrubbing* had already lasted a long time: "If you keep on, sir, you'll find my skin presently."

Besides the house staff, there are a number of outside officers, who wear the badge of the Society, and who are known thereby as the friends of all little children. Could one desire a better distinction?

The Shelter may be found at 7, Harpur Street, Theobald's Road, Bloomsbury, London, W.C.; and the Secretary will be only too pleased to supply any further information my readers may desire.

PRACTICAL PAPERS ON EVERYDAY NURSING.

BY E. M. WATERWORTH, AUTHOR OF "MOTHERS AT HOME," "ABOUT OUR FOOD," ETC.

X.—Invalid Cookery.

IF you have had any experience at all in the sick-room, you will not need me to tell you that a nurse should know how to cook. It may not be necessary perhaps for her to do it herself, but it is certainly most important that she should know how a thing ought to be cooked, so that she may test it before handing the food to the invalid. Equally important it is, too, that she should know the relative value of all foods, in order that when little can be taken, that little may be of a kind to do the most good.

The first place of all, both for sustaining and nourishing properties, must be given to milk. If necessary, it can be lightened by the addition of lime-water, a tablespoonful to half a pint. Scrupulous care should be taken that all jugs and basins used for milk are *scalded* out, not merely washed in hot water. "Boiling water kills all germs, while warm water only makes them grow. It is the growth of these germs that turns milk sour." Make a note of that, mothers, nurses, and cooks.

A pinch of carbonate of soda will keep milk sweet in the warm weather. Never trust only to your taste, either for infants or invalids, but test the milk when it has been some hours in the house, with blue litmus paper. If it is the least bit sour, the paper will turn red. It is well to hold the paper with a pair of scissors, or some other instrument, as if the fingers are hot, the perspiration being acid will turn the paper, and deceive you as to the state of the milk.

Next in value comes beef-tea, but remember that although this preparation is valuable as a stimulant, it cannot be mentioned in the same day with milk as a nutrient. A dog would starve if fed on beef-tea alone, so give milk the first place, if your patient can take it.

There are several ways of making beef-tea, and of course I cannot tell you all, so I must just pick out those which experience tells me are the best.

Beef-tea in a hurry can be made thus: Chop up a pound of lean beef, do not put any water to it, but put it in a covered jar, and stand the jar inside a saucepan half filled with boiling water. Let it stand over the fire for five minutes, then put a pint of boiling water inside the jar, and boil for a quarter of an hour. Strain it, add a little salt, and serve.

Another recipe for beef-tea: One pound of lean beef cut into small pieces, and one mutton shank. Break up the bone, wash it in cold water, put it in a jar with the beef, and add three pints of cold water and half a teaspoonful of salt. Let the whole boil for five hours.

A very useful meat jelly, which will take the place of ordinary essences and cost about half the price, can be made in the following way: Take half a pound of perfectly lean beef (and here let me tell you that no amount of skimming off the fat, *after* the beef-tea is made, will ever take the place of removing the fat altogether before the cooking), and half a pound of the leg of veal with a small piece of bone in it. Cut this all up into dice-sized pieces, not severing the meat entirely. Add two tablespoonfuls of cold water. Let it stand for about an hour in the larder or some other cool place, then sprinkle a little salt over it, tie over the jar, and stand it in a saucepan of boiling water. Let it boil for about three or four hours. Pour it out into a jam pot, and you will find it a strong jelly when cold. Of course, you must not give more than a teaspoonful or so at a time.

One gets tired of the taste of beef after a while, so chicken-tea makes a pleasant change if you can afford it. Take a small chicken, remove the skin and fat, and cut it in halves lengthwise. Take out all the internal parts, and then cut the chicken up in as thin slices as you can manage; put them in a jar with a little salt, and pour over a quart of boiling water. Let it all boil slowly for two hours, then stand it quite by one side of the fire for half an hour, and strain it off.

Chickens naturally remind one of eggs. They stand, perhaps, next to milk in their value as a sick diet. But they must be very fresh, and must be either taken raw or most carefully cooked. When an invalid objects very much to beaten-up egg, give the white without the yolk; it tastes far less and does almost as much good. In fact, if you want a splendid stop-gap whilst waiting for other foods to be prepared, you cannot do better than get a clean bottle, put into it a quart of milk and the whites of three raw eggs, cork it and shake it up as hard as you can, and let the patient take this sustaining mixture as much and as often as he will.

In boiling eggs for an invalid, this is a capital recipe to store up in your mind: "Two minutes in boiling water and two minutes more in water not boiling." In other words, boil your egg for two minutes, then let it stand in the saucepan with the lid on for two minutes longer.

When the doctor orders the patient a little fish, by some extraordinary force of habit everyone's thoughts fly at once to soles. Now, I have given the subject careful con-

sideration; I have made experiments on myself and on other people, or, to speak more correctly, I have submitted to them, and the result is that I am perfectly convinced that soles are not the lightest and most digestible fish.

The object we all have in view when taking food to our sick folk is that they should get the greatest possible good out of the smallest amount of trouble to the digestive organs. So it behoves us to find out which articles of diet answer to this description, and to see that they always begin with those. Let me give you a short list of fish, meat, and vegetables, placing them in their proper order, the most digestible and therefore the most nourishing first.

FISH.—Whiting, plaice, soles, turbot—all to be either boiled or baked. Oysters are very light, but they do not suit or please everybody.

MEAT.—Tripe, chicken, mutton, and beef. Dark meats should be lightly cooked, light meats need more cooking. Neither should ever be cooked twice for an invalid or delicate person.

VEGETABLES.—Cauliflower, spinach, asparagus, and potatoes. The latter, owing to the quantity of water they contain, are more wholesome if baked in their jackets, so that the water is absorbed instead of being increased by boiling.

Another fallacy of the sick-room is, that starchy things, such as arrowroot, tapioca, sago, etc., are nourishing. Their virtue lies simply in the fact that they are a medium for conveying milk and eggs. In cases of diarrhœa, of course, arrowroot has a merit of its own, being very binding. Mix a dessert-spoonful of it with a small quantity of cold water, add gradually half a pint of boiling water or milk, and boil for five minutes, stirring all the time.

Bread-and-milk is a favourite breakfast with many people, and it should be carefully, and I had almost said prettily, made. Cut some stale bread into small square pieces, leaving out the crusts. Boil the milk, and the moment it rises pour it over the bread. Cover the basin with a plate for ten minutes, mix sugar or salt according to taste, and serve. Many people who do not care for ordinary bread-and-milk will enjoy it made with brown or wholemeal bread.

Gruel should be made without any nasty lumps. Take two tablespoonfuls of groats and mix smoothly with a little cold water. Add to this half a pint of cold milk or water in a saucepan, stirring all the time. Boil it slowly for half an hour at least. Strain it and add salt or sugar.

A boiled batter pudding is both light and nourishing, and only requires a little care and to be eaten directly it is ready. Beat up two eggs with half an ounce of sugar. Mix with it a tablespoonful of flour and a pint of milk. Put it in a basin, cover with a cloth, and boil.

Another light pudding which will sometimes tempt a capricious appetite is a boiled bread pudding. If it doesn't do for the invalid it will please the children, so I will give you the recipe. Take half a pound of stale bread, pour over it a pint of hot milk, and allow it to soak for an hour in a covered basin. Have ready two eggs well beaten, then mix them up with the bread. Add sugar and a little nutmeg if liked. Put it into a basin, cover with a cloth, and boil for half an hour.

So far as I can remember, that is about all the necessary recipes for food. Next month I hope to give you some directions as to the invalid's drinks.

"A LITTLE LEARNING."

THE importance of exact knowledge in many things cannot be over-estimated. A doctor was asked by a mother if arrowroot was healthful food for a babe. He told her it was, and the mother fed her child on that alone till it was nearly starved. Had she known that arrowroot contains little but starch, which alone cannot long support life, she might not have furnished so apt an illustration of the proverb, "A little learning is a dangerous thing."

The old story of the Frenchman who was making a dictionary and defined crab as "a small, red fish that walks backwards," also illustrates the need of exact knowledge. Cuvier said the definition was excellent, only that the crab was not a fish, was not red, and did not walk backwards.

An old lady is said to have been asked how to tell good indigo. "Powder the indigo," said she, "sprinkle it upon cold water, and if it is good it will either sink or swim, I have forgotten which."

It was the same with Aunt Margaret's eggs.

"Just take a dozen of 'em—no, a half dozen of 'em—no, it's a dozen—well, there, I can't say, but it's either a dozen or a half dozen—and you put 'em in a pailful—no, a half pailful—part full—no, it's a pailful—no—well, well, it's either a pailful or a half pailful of water—and the good eggs will swim on top—no, the good eggs will sink to the bottom—no, that's not it—the good eggs will swim—no, no, I declare, I don't rightly know; but, anyway, the good eggs will either sink or swim."

It is not always ignorant persons who fail to observe closely. Coleridge and Wordsworth took a drive with a friend. After great difficulty the horse was unharnessed, except that they could not get the collar off. One of them said it was "a downright impossibility" and that the horse's head must have grown since the collar was put on. "La, master," said a girl, "turn the collar upside down."

Inexactness in spelling, and especially as regards names, is far too common. We all remember Mrs. Towser's "scarlet pneumonias;" and almost as bad was the mistake of the University student, who, when asked who was the first king of Israel, replied, "Saul," and then, thinking that he had not hit the mark, tried to improve his answer by adding, "Saul—also called Paul."

The gentleman who was told that his daughter did not get on well because she lacked "capacity" was rather inexact when he told the teacher, by all means to get her one and not to hesitate as to the price. Such a mistake is ridiculous.

A little more correct knowledge of the English language would have been useful to the Frenchman who, knowing that Dr. Samuel Johnson had written the "Rambler," and wishing to invite him to dinner, said: "Vill you have the plaisir of to dine vith me, Mr. Vagabond?"

A WIFE'S TRUST.—St. Ambrose says that a Christian wife was on a journey with her heathen husband, when a thunderstorm arose, overwhelming the man with terror. His wife asked the cause. He replied, "Are not you afraid?" She answered, "No, not at all; for I know that it is the voice of my heavenly Father; and shall a child be afraid of a father's voice?" So struck was the husband with his wife's faith, that he embraced Christianity.

"SHE SPEAKS LIKE A KNIFE."

BY MRS. C. E. R. PARKER.

IT was a peculiar expression, but I understood just how it was, as I tried to comfort poor little Bobby, who was sobbing as if his heart were broken when he ran to tell me his pitiful tale. He had been playing in the nursery with the baby and his sister May, and he did not mean to do it, but he let May's doll fall, and broke its arm off. "And I was *very* sorry," he said; "and Aunt Lucy came in and said I was a very naughty boy, and *she shaked me* too! and spoke awful to me, just like a knife; and I do love my sister May and she loves me, and Aunt Lucy had no right to say that I am a naughty, wicked boy."

Poor little Bobby! His heart was almost broken over his trouble. I felt truly sorry for the little fellow, and I hardly knew how to comfort him until the storm of tears and sobs had somewhat subsided. Then I told him that Aunt Lucy thought he had broken little May's doll to tease her, and he knew how very naughty that would be. Still trying to check his rebellious sobs, he said, "I don't love Aunt Lucy always. She gives me sweets and pennies and pretty things, and she kisses me and says I am a darling boy sometimes; but sometimes she speaks awful sharp, and it cuts me through just like a knife. I don't want her to give me sweets and pretty things and pennies any more;" and the chubby little hands tried very hard to wipe away the tears that ran down his rosy cheeks.

Now, here was injustice, palpable injustice, to the mind of this little boy, and his heart was swelling with wounded feelings at the undeserved punishment and harsh words. Aunt Lucy had been sitting in the garden reading; and hearing little May cry, and seeing the broken doll, while poor little Bobby stood by looking like a culprit, she had given him a good scolding, "and *shaked him*" when he began to cry. Had she only inquired into the merits of the case, she would have learned that Bobby was as much grieved as sister May over the broken doll.

Many children do not seem to feel rough words and a rough manner, and they will try to vindicate themselves and perhaps speak out their sense of the injustice; but there are many tender, loving natures on whom harsh words fall with as much force as a blow, and every nerve and muscle quivers and throbs at the apparently undeserved rebuke.

It is very difficult to be always patient and gentle with little children, but it is safe to inquire into the merits of a case before passing judgment. All are liable to err, and therefore very liable to misjudge. Children are very quick to feel injustice, whether manifested in word or deed; but gentleness and patience are the surest and safest means to bring about harmony and real justice with the little ones God has put under our care.

I remember, not very long ago, while visiting the house of friends, how the comfort and peace of the whole family were destroyed by one or two unkind words spoken at the breakfast table. Opposite me sat two dear little children, a boy and a girl, both happy and healthy and full of life and spirits. While merrily talking, the little boy tipped his chair back against the wall behind him. His father spoke harshly to him and told him "not to do that again;" but after a while the child forgot (who does not forget once in a way?), and as he was telling some story, he was guilty of the same offence a second time. His father spoke very sternly to him, reproving him for having disobeyed, and bade him leave the table and go upstairs. The boy looked up quickly, and with a quivering lip, and quivering heart too, he slowly crept away.

As soon as we left the breakfast table, I ran upstairs, and there huddled up in a corner of the nursery, all in a heap, was the poor little fellow, his curly head buried in a pillow, sobbing as if he had been guilty of some unpardonable sin. I did not say one word to him, but I raised his dear head, and he crept into my arms and sobbed away his trouble close to my heart. Of course, I could not justify disobedience in the least thing, but I did think that the punishment and the mortification it occasioned were greater than was deserved. I feel that it is better to be too lenient than too harsh—better to try and emulate the patience and long-suffering of the dear Lord to us, His children, who forgives us each and all, not only seven times, but seventy times seven, every day of our lives.

Children seldom harbour malice in their hearts. Little Bobby would run through the garden with a handful of flowers for Aunt Lucy within a very short while after she had spoken to him "like a knife;" and Frankie would rush to the gate to meet his father as soon as he saw him returning from his work, telling him some funny story of his dog Tony.

Children will bear a great deal of love and a great deal of patience; it is best to remember this, for our own benefit as well as for theirs. Let us never forget that when the disciples rebuked the mothers who brought their young children to Jesus that He should touch them, He was much displeased, and said unto them, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them."

A CURIOUS ROPE.—In the building of a heathen temple in Japan, strong ropes were wanted with which to haul the huge timbers, so the women in the country all around cut off their long black hair and gave it to the builders. This hair rope was a great sacrifice, for the Japanese women are very proud of their hair.

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A PRACTICAL form of philanthropy exists among the women of San Francisco, who have organised themselves into a society called Doctors' Daughters. The object is to help the sick poor either by personal ministry or by securing for them necessary aid.

GOD AND BABY.—A beautiful infant had been taught to say, "God will take care of baby." It was seized with sickness, and at a time when both parents were hardly convalescent from a dangerous illness. Every day it grew worse, and at last was given up to die. Almost beside herself, the mother prayed to be carried into the room of her darling, to give it one last embrace. When there, she wept aloud; and once more the little creature opened its eyes, looked lovingly up in her face, smiled, and moved its little lips. She bent closer down—"*God will take care of baby.*" Sweet, consoling words! they had hardly ceased, when the angel-spirit had fled.

SOMETHING ABOUT OUR PET CANARIES.

A FAMOUS writer has said that the cage-birds bring the woods and fields into our houses and to the minds and hearts of many who cannot go out to them. And of the chamber-birds there is none which claims more regard than the canary, alike for the sweetness of its song, its varied range, and its beauty in form and colour.

Fresh, voiceful, warbling, rich in tone, he has made lovers and friends in all parts. He fills with delicious sounds the drawing-rooms of the foremost ladies, and again the solitary wood is penetrated by his notes as he sings hanging in his cage at the door of the log-hut. Everywhere he enters he knows how to conquer the affection and companionship of all classes — in royal chambers of state, in the mansion, in the lowly cottage; and he is pre-eminently the darling of the little ones. He sings nearly the whole year, and if the storm rages, and the snow falls, and we want the soothing songs of sweet birds, he sings for us his loveliest strains. His maintenance is therefore cheap.

"Sweets to the Sweet."

The canary bird, as we know him, is something very different from his original as found in the Canary Islands, from which he took his name. In 1478, these Islands were conquered for Spain by Henry the Navigator, and among the rich prizes which he carried home were some birds of singular beauty, which soon proved their capacity for song in their new home, and, by-and-by, became so much in demand that Spanish bird-lovers devoted themselves to breeding them; and, we learn, actually carried back to the Canary Islands some of the trained birds to act as decoys, and for breeding purposes, only the male birds having been brought to Europe. These travelled birds were found to be very healthy and long-lived.

The original colour of the birds was grey, merging into green beneath, and somewhat resembling the colours of the linnet; but by various devices, canaries are now to be met with of various colours, and in almost every degree of shade and combination. With regard to the yellow colour, it is said that after domestication in Belgium, Germany, and England, the birds threw up on the feathers small patches of yellow or lighter colour, and by carefully matching those that bore the largest number of these spots, breeders at length obtained bright and uniform colour, closely resembling those of pure yellow in the present day. From the Tyrolese bird, three quite distinct breeds have been produced. The Dutch altered principally the figure, the English principally the colour, and the Germans especially developed the capacity for song.

The throat of the canary is a most wonderful organ—perhaps the most wonderful in nature, and not for compass alone, though its compass is great, in some cases three octaves. The people of St. Andreasberg, in Lower Saxony, are exceedingly clever trainers of canaries, and their one great merit is that they have developed the wonderful performances we marvel at out of the natural song of the bird. The song of wild canaries is still to be heard, so that comparison is possible, and has been made by experts with this result. Only by their methods could the song, in spite of its high development, have preserved as basis its natural freshness and richness.

As to the varieties of the canary, they are very many, and the reader will be interested to know the leading marks of the more celebrated. There is (1) the clear Norwich, all yellow; (2) the Norwich uneven marked or ticked; (3) the Norwich even marked, which has a dark mark round each eye, called "spectacle eye-marks," the smaller wing-feathers and lower portion of the legs dark; and (4) the crested Norwich, which has a dark crest or cap, and the small wing-feathers dark. Then there is the London Fancy (5), all clear or yellow, save the whole of the wing and tail feathers, which are black. The Lizard (6) is clear yellow on the crown, the breast streaked from the neck downwards, and the back beautifully spangled, the spangles increasing in size as they descend, wings and tail black but fringed with light, legs and beak black. The Manchester Coppy (7) is entirely yellow and large; it has a golden crest tufted over the beak—a magnificent bird. The Scotch Fancy (8) is very long; the wings and tail so falling from the shoulder as to form a curve or half-moon, and is entirely yellow. The Yorkshires (9) are hardly so deep in colouring as the Norwich, more of a lemon colour; but are longer than Norwich birds, straight in the back and longer in the neck. The phrase "mealy" indicates a certain lightness of colour.

Now a word as to diet and treatment. All farinaceous seeds are dangerous for the voice of the canary, and some are bad for his health. They invariably make the voice light, harsh, and shrieky. Only oleaginous seeds should be given, and the best is ripe scalded summer rape seed—that is, the seed which is sown in spring, not the winter rape seed which is sown in autumn. The milder and sweeter his tastes, the more esteemed the canary becomes. The bird does not naturally care so much for this seed as for some others, and will, save in exceptional circumstances, eat no more of it than it requires for sustenance.

Small mixtures of poppy and lettuce seed are admissible for most canaries.

The canary seed, so-called, acts very injuriously on the bird, if given in any quantity, and so does hemp seed. The finer bred birds should get neither of them, for it makes them violent and screechy. The German trainers will have nothing to do with hemp seed; some of the English allow a *little* of it.

But a clever singer cannot do on rape seed alone, and as a strengthening food a knife-point full of hard-boiled egg, with some biscuit daily, or every other day, suits him. A steady singing bird, indeed, is not to be kept in good condition without egg-food. It is the only food which gives the bird steadiness, and is at the same time as favourable for the voice. Birds thus partially fed on egg have a *meltingness* in the organ and a very melodious strain in song. Only, if given in excess, it makes them violent, like so many other things; and therefore it must be given very judiciously, and with due regard to the individual requirement.

Egg, with a little maize meal, or sugar, baked after the recipe of Mr. Peter Erntges, of Elberfeld, known in the trade as Maizena biscuit, is very good, and may be easily obtained.

In moulting-time the heads of marigolds, but not the leaves, are much recommended.

It is needless to say that all the points respecting cleanliness, watering, etc., which are important as regards other cage birds, are also to be very jealously attended to in the case of the canary, if you wish your bird to be well in health, and to sing vigorously with softness of tone.

ORDER IN THE HOME.

SUCH qualities as method, order, and punctuality are regarded by some women as the lowest among the virtues. They are even despised as having something prim, priggish, "old maidish," about them. However this may be, a vast number of the most serious evils that afflict ordinary people have their root in the fact that they have *no method*. Existence is all at random. No plans are laid; or if laid, they are never adhered to. There is no "fashioning" of themselves (1 Peter i. 14), but they float about in daily life as the circumstances or moods of each day carry them.

We are told that one difference between a fluid and a solid is, that a fluid has no form, but takes the form of the vessel which contains it. Such persons are like fluids. They do not, consciously and deliberately, shape, direct, or control their lives, but allow them to be moulded into any kind of shapeless figures by their circumstances. They have almost lost the use of their wills. They *wish*, but that is the utmost they can do. The feeblest outside conditions—the influence of weather and atmosphere, a fog, an east wind, a sunless day—can overrule and prostrate what ought to be a sovereign force, the will of an independent human being, who becomes, like any vegetable,

"Servile to all the skiey influences."

The consequences of no method are banefully seen in the home. There are a great many families who live in a perpetual scramble. There is no regular hour for going to bed at night. When the days are long, if the evening is fine the very smallest of the children are out and "agate" till nine or ten o'clock. If an interesting gossip comes on, the family party, and any visitors who have dropped in, stand talking it over till midnight and much later. As a natural consequence there is no regular hour for getting up in the morning. You go in on business, thinking the day pretty well advanced, and you find the remains of breakfast on the table.

There is no particular time for the children to prepare their lessons for school. They do it sometimes at one hour, sometimes at another, and often stay out all the evening and rush through their lessons the last thing, when they ought to be in bed.

When you call, you are greeted by some such apologetic remark as—"Such a dreadful house to come to!" or, "We are in a bit of a muddle to-day;" but the house is "dreadful" whenever you come to it, and the "muddle" exists equally every day.

Then, too, there is no regular period for paying the household bills. Accounts at the butcher's and the baker's are allowed to run up for weeks or months, and when they come in unexpectedly their amount seems appalling.

The waste and destruction in such houses are incalculable. Nobody knows where anything is. There is a place for nothing, and nothing is in its place. If an important paper or letter is suddenly wanted, every drawer is pulled out, and the contents tumbled on the floor before it is found, if it is ever found. All the household stores melt away in the most inexplicable manner. No one knows when the chest of tea was opened, or how long the box of candles ought to last. "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand."

Generally in these homes all the keys have been lost. There is no such thing here as a memorandum book for entering engagements and other matters liable to be forgotten, or a "Where is it?" for keeping the addresses of friends. If such little books are ever started, they are quickly lost, or they fall into the all-destroying hands of the baby of the family. If there was once an account book, it has been mislaid, or has been lying so long without entries that it seems hopeless to begin again. "Money *must* go," says the housekeeper with no method, "and I see no use in putting down every penny."

Women with no method never answer letters. I do not mean that they never write, sooner or later, after receiving a letter; but they never read it over in order to reply to its questions, comment on its news, and respond to its remarks. The correspondence is like what a conversation would be, in which one person were to go on making observations, interesting enough, but without the slightest connection with the other person's remarks.

You know perfectly well that if you lend a book to a

woman with no method, you can hardly hope to see it again; or if you do, it will be with its back broken or some of its leaves gone. In fact, the house is a gulf, which seems to swallow up beyond recovery whatever goes into it.

We do not advocate being enslaved by rule in anything. Rule is a means and not an end, and with the best plans interruptions come, which, coming unsought, have authority higher than our plans, and must be met with cheerful readiness. "For by so doing," Thomas à Kempis says, "a good work is not lost, but changed into a better." But we advocate arranging our lives, knowing what we have to do, "doing everything at its proper time, keeping everything in its proper place." Not only shall we mothers thus get more done, but what is done will be accomplished in a calm, quiet way, instead of in the worried, heated fashion of people who are trying to "overtake" a mass of work without method or preconcerted plan. William Wilberforce used to keep a book in which his daily expenditure of time was entered under various headings, as devotion, business, recreation, talk, reading, and dressing. This was kept with as careful regularity as the account of his expenditure of money. Everyone knows the amount of splendid work he achieved in life, though all do not know the sunny cheerfulness and unruffled sweetness of temper with which he carried on his daily and multifarious business.

While we "let things go," and live "just as it comes," our brief allotted span is running out at a fixed rate. Though we have no method, the sublime processes of nature move above us with unswerving regularity. "Order is Heaven's first law." Only a certain number of times shall we see winter change to spring. We note to-night a certain planet calmly shining in a certain place among the stars. Before it is seen in that position again, having accomplished its slow circuit of the heavens, we shall in all likelihood have no more a portion in anything that is done under the sun.

Are we, then, to end each day in a hurry, and life itself in a tumult; and when the hurried day is over, and the fevered life is closing, to leave half our work undone?

MY MOTHER AT THE GATE.

BY MRS. G. M. SMILEY.

[My mother promised before she died that, if permitted, she would wait for her children at the gate of heaven until all had entered in.]

CLOSE beside the gate of heaven,
In my dreams I oft-times see
One who never leaves the portal,
Waiting ever there for me.
And the strong and mighty angel,
He who guards heaven's outer door,
Wonders much to see her sitting
At the gateway evermore.

And he says in gentle chiding,
"Tell me why you ever wait?"
Then my mother's voice makes answer,
"Chide me not, O Strong and Great!
I am waiting for my children,
Some of them are very late;
From afar I see them coming,
I must meet them at the gate."

So I journey toward that city,
And my heart is oft elate
As I think of crown and mansion,
And my promised high estate.
But, among the joys of heaven,
Which I eagerly await,
Is the meeting with my mother,
Who is watching at the gate.

Hints for Busy Housewives.

HOME DECORATION.—In place of plush and heavy embroidered stuffs for various draperies, strips of ordinary veiling are very effective, and are much in favour. This veiling, by the way, is wonderfully cheap, and pretty for use all the year round. Gilded cord, or even coloured cord, may be used to tie back heavy curtains, instead of tarnishable chains or ribbons that fade quickly.

Sauce for Pudding.—To a pint of boiling milk add the beaten yolks of three eggs, two tablespoonfuls of sugar, and flavouring extract to taste.

Bathing.—Never omit regular bathing, for unless the skin is in active condition the cold will close the pores and favour congestion and other diseases.

Good Tea and Coffee.—What is the reason that a cup of tea made from the best brands is so often insipid, and coffee—Mocha and Java mixed—after passing through the ordeal of preparation, presents itself as a nauseating compound? This, too, in spite of the emphatic assertion that the water was boiling till it ran over. Charles Delmonico, an undisputed authority, thus explains the cause: "The secret is in putting good, fresh water into a kettle, already quite warm, setting the water to boil quickly, and then taking it right off to use for tea, coffee, or other drinks, before it is spoiled. To let it steam, simmer, and evaporate, until the good water is all in the atmosphere and the lime and iron and dregs left in the kettle—that is what makes a good many people sick, and is worse than no water at all."

A Kitchen Oven with a glass door, so that one may see how the cooking is going on without opening it, is an American lady's invention.

To Prevent Paint from Scaling.—First, thoroughly wash the parts to be painted, and then brush over with a thin coat of linseed oil. This is especially beneficial in treating iron articles. By following such a method you will no longer be troubled with scaling, for the thin, liquid oil goes into the pores of the surface, absorbs all moisture, and consequently the paint, when applied, adheres firmly. Thus the paint is rendered so hard that neither frost, damp, nor air will cause it to separate.

Ironing Fancy Work.—Embroidery should always be ironed on the wrong side, on a soft surface, such as heavy flannel or felting, with a clean, white cloth over it, and should be ironed until thoroughly dry. In this way the design will be beautifully brought out.

Sally Lunns.—One quart of flour, butter the size of an egg, three spoonfuls of sugar, two eggs, two teacupfuls of milk, one teaspoonful of soda, two of cream of tartar, and a little salt. Put the cream of tartar, salt, and sugar in the flour, add the eggs not beaten, the butter melted, and one cup of milk. Put the soda in the other cup and stir all together. Bake for fifteen or twenty minutes.

HINTS ON HOME DRESSMAKING.

ONCE more we are settling down after the holiday season. Chidren return to school, and the busy mother begins to look round in order to make preparations for chilly days, and later on for the frost and snow, which will come upon us all too quickly.

The time for cotton dresses will have gone by, and a warmer school frock must be provided. There may be one of last season's dresses which will answer if the skirt is let down and the sleeves lengthened. Velveteen is very useful for this purpose, especially when there is no material to match the dress available. Where a new school dress has to be purchased, serge or cheviot cloth will be found light, warm, and durable. A braid trimming will be the most suitable for a dress of this kind. Basket woven cloth, as well as other fancy dress stuffs, will make better dresses, which can be trimmed with velveteen, fur, or coloured passementerie. There are also crumpled, tufted, striped, and shot materials in great variety, as well as chequered woollens, which bid fair to become very popular for autumn and winter wear.

Fig. 37.

The bell skirt with gored front width is still much used for outdoor wear. It is usually trimmed along each seam with narrow gimp lace or passementerie. Full overskirts and tunics draped somewhat simply are gaining favour rapidly.

There seems to be a growing tendency to have a full trimming at the wrist. Hence we see a wheel-shaped cuff turned back, or a full flounce which almost covers the hand. Another style is to have the sleeve left open at the wrist and trimmed with gathered lace.

Fig. 38.

Fig. 37. One of the great necessities of this season of the year is a long mantle which will prove a protection against wind and rain. Such a mantle we show under this number. The chief difficulty with a garment of this kind is to get the full dress sleeve into that of the mantle. With this shape there will be no trouble of that kind, for the sleeve is dolman-shaped, which gives the extra size required. The body of the mantle is tight fitting, and the bell-shaped skirt is set on separately. The pelerine can be made apart from the mantle, so as to be worn without the under-part. Shower-proof cloth or tweed or cheviot will be very suitable material, and the edges can be turned under and stitched or trimmed with Russian braid. Italian cloth can be used for facings, or Prussian binding for the seams, and also for putting over the edges to make the turning neat.

Fig. 38. This dress is a very suitable pattern for making in serge or tweed, and will be very useful for this season of the year. The skirt is cut with a gored front and is quite plain except for the pocket tabs set on either side of the front width. The front of the bodice is cut double breasted, and the cape collar is cut in one with it, and has a seam down the centre of the back, where it finishes in a deep point. This should be lined with buckram or stiff muslin. The basque is set under the lower edge of the bodice, and is pointed in the front, and also at the back. A front or chemisette of fancy silk, lined with sateen, is used. It can be put on separately, and made to fasten on the shoulder or hook down the centre, or it could be sewn down the right side and hooked over to the left side of the bodice lining. A stand-up collar is used with this front. A dress of this kind will take six and a half to seven yards of double-width material. The sleeve is full at the top, and is finished with a cuff at the wrist.

Fig. 39.

Fig. 39. Here we show a little girl's dress suitable for a child from six to ten years of age. The lower or skirt part is made of sage-green cashmere, while the yoke and sleeve epaulettes are of white and green checked cheviot. The body has a fitting lining, and over this the fancy stuff is laid in gathers about four inches deep. The skirt is lined throughout and rounded out, so as to fit to the yoke, where it is secured with a cord. The double epaulettes are cut on the cross and are set into the armhole together with the sleeve. A leather belt or waistband of the fancy material is used to secure the waist.

Fig. 40.

Fig. 40. Most of our readers will be pleased with the practical pattern of a fitting cooking apron shown under this number. Holland or apron linen is best for a cooking apron, and as this pattern covers the entire dress it will be most useful for that purpose. White braid can be used as trimming, or a checked print laid on in cross-way bands will answer equally well.

Flat patterns can be supplied. Figs. 37, 38, and 39, 6½d. each. Fig. 40. 4½d. Address, "M.C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.